



AŞİTÎ BARIŞ PEACE

BULLETIN OF THE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVE "FREEDOM FOR ABDULLAH OCALAN – PEACE IN KURDISTAN"

No. 2 • May 2003

Editorial

Whether the law of nations has been violated or not - the war in Iraq has brought the Kurdish question back on the international agenda. The debate about future federal structures in Iraq is particularly important for the Kurds. Well-reputed think-tanks have already begun to think beyond such a scheme. In their considerations the dream of a "democratic Middle East" is virtually taking shape. It remains open yet what kind of democracy this is going to be. The people in the Middle East will have to choose themselves in the end. For all the map exercises going on at present the geographic situation and the areas of Kurdish settlement in the Middle East are very interesting. After the Lausanne treaty in 1923 when the division of Kurdistan was determined any national Kurdish ambition necessarily had a destabilising effect on local regimes. Today's attempts at a reformation of the Middle East let the situation appear in a different light. The democratic ambitions of the Kurds in Turkey and their avowed intentions to solve the Kurdish question by democratic means within the existing borders of Turkey might absolutely have a stabilising effect. This will, however, remain a dream if there is no solution of both the Kurdish and the Israel-Palestine question. Currently, however, the status quo is being challenged. The objective must be a democratic Middle East with federal character allowing room for the development of civil structures that can give the region its long needed impetus. The surrounding oligarchic, theocratic, or nepotistic regimes are impediments on this way. The creation of OSCE-like structures could be a first step in order to allow for all relevant powers to take part in such a project. Any kind of imposed democratisation does not look very promising if it is not supported by the people. The dynamic process presently gathering momentum invites both the people and the regimes to revise their opinion. It will be crucial, however, to what extent the basis of these societies can get involved in this process.

The Kurds in Turkey have made it clear that they are ready to participate in this which is also underlined by the consequent line of peace they follow. Turkey cannot close its eyes to such a process if it is willing to ensure its continued future existence. Then a peaceful understanding with its Kurdish citizens is the only viable way. A democratic Turkey which offers all its citizens the same cultural and political rights may lead the way for democratising the entire Middle East. It is Turkey's turn now.

Besides, this edition features an analysis of the Iraq issue by Hans Branscheidt, an article on related topics by Jean Lambert, plus interviews with Kenneth Pollack, Irfan Dünder, and Duran Kalikan.

The editorial staff, May 10, 2003

First Signatories Of The International Initiative Freedom for Abdullah Ocalan -

Peace in Kurdistan:

Máiréad Maguire, Nobel Peace Award, Northern Ireland

Dario Fo, Director, Writer, Actor, Nobel Literature Prize Award, Italy **Adolfo Perez Esquivel**, Nobel Literature Prize Award, Argentine

Jose Ramos-Horta, Peace Nobel Prize Award, East-Timor

José Saramago, Nobel Literature Prize Award, Portugal

Danielle Mitterrand, President, Donation France Liberté, France **Ramsey Clark**, Lawyer, former Attorney General, USA

Uri Avnery, Former Member of Knesset, Gush Shalom (Peace Bloc), Israel

Prof. Dr. Noam Chomsky, Linguist, Writer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA

Alain Lipietz MEP, France

Pedro Marset Carpos MEP, Spain

Mrs. Jean Lambert MEP, GB

Lord Avebury, Chairman, Parliamentary Human Rights Group, House of Lords, Great Britain

Harry Cohen, MP, Labour Party, Great Britain

Cynog Dafis, MP, Plaid Cymru, Great Britain

Lord Raymond Hylton, House of Lords, Great Britain

Lord Rea, House of Lords, Great Britain

Walid Jumblat, President, Socialist Progressive Party, Lebanon **Rudi Vis**, MP, Labour Party, Great Britain

Paul Flynn, MP, Labour Party, Great Britain

Máiréad Keane, Director International Department, Sinn Féin, Northern Ireland

Domenico Gallo, Lawyer, former senator (CI), member of Magistratura Democratica, Italy

Livio Pepino, Lawyer, President of Magistratura Democratica, Italy

Xabier Arzalluz, President, PNV (Basque Nationalist Party)

Tony Benn, M P, Labour Party, Great Britain

Giovanni Palombarini, Lawyer, former

continued on last page

Contents**p. 2
Turkey's Refusal To Take Part In
The War***by Jean Lambert***p. 4
A Window Into The Modern
Age**

The Gulf-region is underdeveloped, politically instable, and incapable of reforms

*by Hans Branscheidt***p. 7
No Fair Trial In Turkey**

Interview with Irfan Dünder
by John Toobisch-Haupt

**p. 9
"The Heirs Of Gilgamesh"**

Abdullah Ocalan's new book
by Oliver Kontry

**p. 12
Self-Determination And Democratisation**

The vision of a democratic Middle East
Interview with Duran Kalkan

**p. 13
In The Aftermath Of The War**

Interview with Kenneth Pollack
by Cemal Ucar

Published by: *International Initiative "Freedom for Abdullah Öcalan - Peace in Kurdistan"*, a non-profit organisation in D-50445 Cologne, P.O. Box 100511
info@freedom-for-ocalan.com
www.@freedom-for-ocalan.com

Editorial Staff: Klaus Becher, Klaus Happel, Nicki Rensten, John Tobisch-Haupt

Donations are very welcome.

Bank: Stadtparkasse Köln,

Code: 37 05 01 98,

Acc.No.: 46 79 32 87 (subject:Asiti)

Turkey's Refusal To Take Part In The War

I was personally pleased...

by Jean Lambert

The Green Party has adopted a consistent principled stand against the war. We are standing firm on this now and we still consider that this was an illegal invasion.

That arguments and excuses given that this was a war dealing with weapons of mass destruction are simply not best dealt with through physical force.

Such action implies that the more powerful you are the less likely you are to be invaded.

For us as a Party, it is imperative that we return to working through international institutions and through observing treaties.

For many years I have been trying to raise the human rights issues of the Kurdish people in the European Parliament.

Since the war began, there is no doubt that we have seen greater attention paid to the situation of Kurdish people.

How unfortunate that it has taken such violent and illegal action to do so. Many people are much more aware now of the difficulties they face.

Although, in some respects, the situation of the Kurds actually made perception about the invasion complicated, you can understand how for Kurds living within Iraq's borders that the war could be a positive way forward.



Jean Lambert

However, equally, for the Kurds living within Turkey's borders it could prove far more repressive.

The question now is how do we use the possibilities that have been opened up by this action in order to secure human rights for the Kurdish people and their recognition as a people combined with greater political autonomy.

I was personally pleased to see Turkey's Parliament refuse to allow the United States to use Turkish bases.

The focus that has naturally been on the Kurds of Iraq, should allow us now to talk about the plight of Kurds elsewhere,

such as Turkey. We need to make sure we link the issues of the people across those existing borders and to look at an overall settlement which brings recognition with the states.

The impressions I have about the plight of Kurds in Turkey since the war started is that there has been little improvement. On the contrary we are still seeing intense monitoring and scrutiny.

The recent arrest of Ilisu Dam campaigner Nick Hilyard and of those that were with him looking into the implications of the new pipeline for people on the ground is just one example.

The judgement from the European Court of Human Rights about the sentencing of Adullah Ocalan is also throwing up problems for the Government, although they could start blaming this on the previous regime and work for improvements.

Indeed, how the Government responds to these public legal challenges is going to be very important. They could make a start by improving Ocalan's prison conditions before moving him to a retrial.

On the matter of the banning of HADEP, the issue of banning political parties is highly problematic.

Of course we have the current example in the EU itself of the Spanish Courts upholding the ban on Batisuna.

We can say that the Parliament is following the issue of HADEP closely and that the issue has been raised formally in Parliament and with the Turkish Authorities.

Regarding the imprisonment of Leyla Zana and her colleagues, the European Parliament will be sending an official

delegation to the second stage of her hearing. Obviously as a former Sakharov prize winner for the Parliament, we feel a special responsibility towards her and her colleagues.

How will EU negotiations now be pressing on with Turkey after its mixed reaction to the war and the somewhat mixed messages from the AKP government about its position on fulfilling its human rights and civil rights obligations as embodied in the Copenhagen Criteria?

Enlargement has raised many issues for the Parliament, only some of which are now being addressed. We have to solve the problem of Cyprus which has become ever more pressing as Enlargement becomes a reality.

When we are looking at future relations with Turkey we also need to remain alert to the influence of the US within this. Before the invasion of Iraq, the US was most supportive of Turkey's admission to the EU.

It is not clear now if that will now still be the case.

Also we do have to take into account the views of the new EU countries who may have a different perspective on Turkey's membership. What we have to reinforce with Turkey's Government is that human rights and economic stability are inseparable.

They cannot solve their economic problems until they have dealt with their human rights problems.

There is a huge problem generally in Iraq concerning aid and the future of refugees from both within and outside the country. The Parliament will want to see movement on this subject and, given that colleagues of mine from the Green/EFA Group visited the Maxmur camp not so long ago, I know we will

have a vested interest in wanting to see the safety and security of the people currently living there.

So what is the outlook? I tend to be optimistic by nature but there is no doubt that the situation is very difficult and that the current instability externally will not help the internal stability of Turkey for example.

On a more positive note, though, the strong statements from Kurdish leaders in Iraq about seeking autonomy rather than independence have been both useful and reassuring.

Again we need to stress that the Turkish Government has more to gain by taking a positive response on human rights than it does by continuing repression.

Jean Lambert was elected **Green MEP** for London in the 1999 European elections.

She is a full member of the Employment and Social Affairs Committee, a full member of the Petitions Committee, and a substitute member of the Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs (Civil Liberties) Committee.

She is also a member of the Joint Parliamentary Committee for Malta, and involved in various intergroups as described below. She is a Vice-President of the Greens/European Free Alliance political Group in the European Parliament. This Group is made up of Green and Regionalist MEPs from around Europe and has 44 Members.

A Window Into The Modern Age

The Gulf-region is underdeveloped, politically instable, and incapable of reforms

By Hans Branscheidt

The war is over.

Once again, one of the 200 wars that has taken place in the world since 1945 has been waged in Iraq. It is the rule, rather than the exception that such wars are illegitimate according to the law of nations, with only two legitimate occurrences. But no Security Council has ever dealt with these wars with any particular interest, let alone vetoed them or succeeded in stopping them. No part of the "peace-axis Moscow-Paris-Berlin" has ever abstained from warfare if their own interests seemed to argue for war: neither Putin in Chechnya, nor Schroder in Kosovo, nor Chirac in Africa.

The law of nations is inoperative.

Changes of regime brought about from outside are quite usual in recent history. Dictators use to call them "foreign interference"; the oppressed use to demand them regardless of any UN-mandate.

In the current Iraq conflict the US relies on power which is not authorised by law, while the Europeans on the other hand invoke a law that has no power. The United Nations General Assembly, which claims a global legitimacy, proves in terms of human rights to be a general assembly of torturers, oppressors and dictatorships. Who then writes the law of nations? The nations! - No other legisla-

tor has so far emerged. But it is not the Saddams, the Kim Yong IIs, the Assads, the Khaddafis, or the Khameneis who demand responsibility beyond their interests, but the usual suspects. And where do we find these suspects? Where are they located? In that wealthy part of the world that we call the West although it is joined by a growing part of the East.

Whatever wrong or deficiency there may be in this, in the West the prevailing ideology is no longer merely one of nationhood, ethnicity, or religion but is based on the idea of individual legal security within a state of law. This in turn is inconceivable without power.

Why then is it a part of the West which turns away from the classic law of nations, if it is unjust and also wrong and dangerous to discard this tradition? Because new historical facts have arisen which, while not rebutting the law, demand that it be changed.

Most notably, the activists of social movements (not only in the West), feminists, antiglobalists, human rights universalists, who in the case of Iraq pressed for respect for the old law of nations in their demands, have conceptually already overcome this old law. Individual human rights are supposed to be enforced even in violation of the principles

of international law, against the principle of national sovereignty, that is, the principle of external non-interference. But how can despots be dealt with who go for nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction? Will their victims have to wait for the first blow which already might be final? Or are those potentially threatened permitted to exercise prevention?

The new violence of the 21st century, whether it comes unconventionally from a state or conventionally from non-states, whether from civil wars or religious wars - this violence cannot be conceptualised within the framework of the classic law of nations.

When war no. 201 in Iraq, that was doubtless waged in violation of international law by the US, has come to an end this simply means that the fight has only just begun.

The peace movement, being oblivious of politics, only saw the Iraq war as a deadline, as the day when the war was to begin, in violation of international law, and it merely wanted to avert that day. It has never been willing to recognise the constitutive conflict itself, the causes underlying it - apart from the meagre monocausal reference to "OIL".

The German writer Uwe Johnson once put it this way: "The middle classes al-

ways want the war to be invisible, and not to be." War, however, is perpetual, without end. There never has been peace. The abstract choice between peace and war has never been real for the oppressed.

It verges on the miraculous that this huge international concern about the war in Iraq - that has always been so conspicuously absent when the Kurds or Shiites were in for it - has managed to avoid any debate about what is fundamentally significant about this external military intervention. This is that there is a basic social conflict in the Middle East countries and a deficiency in even the poorest democratic standards of the modern age.

In its latest Human Development Report, the UNDP observes in the Middle East a continuous decline over many years in the central areas of economic and social development.

At the same time, with the exceptions of Yemen and Sudan, there has been no change of regime or even government during the past 30 years.

Despite a wealth of natural resources in the countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council and in the Mashreq, the region is underdeveloped in every respect and, apparently, incapable of reforms in its present state.

According to the UNDP, the rate of progress of development in 22 Arab or Muslim countries was on the level of the countries of the Sahel.

The situation of women, in particular, is disastrous. The oil producing countries, these clerically or autocratically governed structures of the Middle East, find themselves in a situation of unparalleled socio-economic, and also cultural, standstill. There is no emancipatory reformatory dynamic in sight promising a future

reformation of the house of Saud. As to manufacturing conditions in Syria, we find only pre-industrial capabilities, while in Egypt autocracy, nepotism, and oppression prevail and in Iran backwardness and clerical pressure. In Turkey there is a parliamentary system and a authoritative National Security Council, that so far are not about to launch the necessary reforms of the society. We may add to this the Ba'ath regime in Iraq which has proved effectively for 30 years that any democratic initiative can be disposed of, with poison gas if need be.

The clear immobility of these conditions, the rigid refusal to embrace modernity, means - with or without war - there is the threat of a collapse with far-reaching consequences at a central point in this world.

Earlier, both Europeans and US-Americans set up the "petrol station Middle East", installing and backing the corresponding regimes.

They all took part in this. The dissent within the western (and eastern) elites, which has become notable recently, results from the varying states having different answers to the question of how to deal with the problem, which can no longer be ignored or denied.

In the main there are two prevalent concepts at present: "Containment", which is the German-French dominated position, "intervention" plus democracy building and education with participation of opposition forces in the corresponding countries, which is the US position.

Whereas, since about 1991, the US has advocated the proscription of all diplomatic and economic activities of the Saddam regime, the French, Germans, and Russians not only wished to continue their co-operation with the Iraqi regime but were even attracted by the status quo in the Middle East. The mar-

kets presenting themselves there, and the resources, from their point of view, did not seem to create a particular urgency in the issues of democracy and reformation. If at all. In their view it was regimes like the Iraqi one that showed the reliability that was needed. Iraq was a multiracial state, not an ethnically homogenous nation, brought about artificially under pressure and sedulously maintained by Saddam by means of forced Arabisation, which, however, exactly for this reason seemed to be a guarantee that any attempt towards plurality could be comfortably controlled.

The entire German Middle East policy, too, having been static for years can be summarised in a single sentence: There are good deals waiting in the Middle East, where there are regimes that are able through their own means to maintain dictatorial control of their people. The continuously repeated statement by the German foreign minister Joseph Fischer that one should keep out of Iraq as otherwise everything will blow up there, only serves to confirm this.

From this point of view Saddam Hussein means the greatest possible stability. At the same time, however, possible instability lies - according to the German foreign ministry - in all attempts to grant the oppressed and the victims of genocide, the ethnic, religious, or political groups of Iraq their own rights and freedoms in a future federal and democratic society.

It is however by favouring this option that the Europeans are able to play the role of "friends of the Arabs and the Middle East."

In the framework of the containment policy, this was played strategically through the massive promotion of their trade association, against the US, which favoured complete change.

The US was therefore cast in the unattractive role of the global sheriff, while the Europeans acted as though they would and could solve all problems by means of development aid and dialogue.

It was the neo-conservative ideas of the Republican Party in the US that led to the view that such an unfavourable role allocation could not be tolerated any longer. In particular, because the Europeans were closing advantageous economic deals, while the US was identified as the permanent villain of the piece, in the eyes of the neo-conservatives the European states lost their importance as traditional NATO allies.

The pragmatically simple statement by Dick Cheney, that it was from now on the task that would define the coalition and not the other way round, led already at the start of the war to the cancellation of previous arrangements and security accords. If the US would have to act on its own, at its own risk and its own expense, it would also have to be on its terms. Condoleezza Rice made this the maxim for the reconstruction of Iraq when the defeat of the Saddam regime seemed to become imminent.

The Europeans for their part not only declined to act decisively in the Middle East, they also had no credible concept or idea at hand that might have been regarded as realistically corresponding to the problems of the region.

This is where it becomes clear why Germany's Turkey and Middle Eastern policies, in particular, persist in passive sterility, and why Europe does not take action, a frequent and insistent question notably on the part of the Kurds.

Now, after the Iraq war the fight begins anew.

It was not the military planning and execution of the intervention that was deci-

sive but what had already happened beforehand and what will happen now.

Turkey did not march into Iraq. However this cannot be ruled out for the future. If Turkey does decide in favour of an intervention, it must anticipate US opposition, as well as the opposition of the Kurds and the new powers in Iraq. In fact, US-Turkish relations are on the brink of collapse. This offers a big opportunity for the Kurds and other groups in Iraq, while Ankara cannot reckon on urgently needed US and European loans. Its full EU-membership aspirations have suffered another setback.

A new Iraq that will certainly receive international recognition will refuse to tolerate any military interference by Turkey with reference to its sovereignty and new authority. In theory, this is the end of the Erdogan government. Worse: the western project of advertising Turkey as the first modern system in the Islamic sphere might now focus on Iraq with the help of the US instead.

The Israeli government, too, which has never been completely convinced of the strategic relationship with Ankara may focus all its energy on Iraq, which is more important for it.

In the process of this first-time breakthrough of modernity in an Arabian country, Iraq would become multi-ethnic and would be a rich country. Mosul and Kirkuk, whatever may happen, are unthinkable without Kurdish claims to them. An unexpectedly favourable situation for the Kurds.

Illusionary Optimism? No, this is cold, realistic political calculation.

The persisting sceptical question whether the US really does want a democracy there and whether it will succeed in implementing it, is simply wrong: from now on the United States is in a difficult situation and under substantial pressure to succeed.

It has to produce an acceptable model

because only this can be exemplary for the people in the neighbouring countries. Only a reasonably consolidated democracy will bring about stability.

Only a US-sponsored successfully democratic Iraq will make available the legitimisation which the US needs to secure by all means in the course of its broad campaign for the political restructuring of the region.

The hegemon cannot and does not want to be a permanent occupying power on whose shoulders rests the entire responsibility. He will have to delegate it. A military dictatorship of many years, with or without general Franks, would not be appropriate in this respect.

From now on the US is dependent on regional actors. It will have to solicit their acceptance and participation. If, however, all factions of the US administration feel obliged to implement a federal model of democracy in the Mashreq that proves attractive and important in the region - this will not be possible without far-reaching involvement of the Kurds in all their "guest countries".

At this point the circle could close with a positive result that might become the most important outcome of the present intervention and a window into modernity for the multi-ethnic countries from Ankara to Palestine consistent also with Kurdish ideas for the future.

The priority is to grant a large, open region beyond merely ethnic or cultural categories or class differences, that may eventually consist of a system of federations spanning the Middle East in a way that all people involved are free to live unimpeded according to their respective properties and traits and their constitutional civic rights as free and equal people. Eventually the Middle East will also be enlarged as an economic region, enabling prosperity, trade and industry in place of the present sectionalism and its commercial limitations in the past

framework of borders drawn by imperialism.

A cultural space for all civilisations of Mesopotamian, Arabian, or Persian origin and tradition based on joint participation in the resources, solidary utilisation of water and oil: this is a reasonable objective for the Middle East - and it has to be the goal. There is no alternative.

The Kurdish projections for the future in particular have dealt with this idea for a long time agreeing with it as the only perspective for themselves and everybody else.

This is not the result of an illegal war in violation of international law, bloody and destructive and therefore calling for an explicit restriction and a different and better legitimisation of violence in history. It will be the result accomplished by those who make their mark on this event in order to shape the region to human measure because they act now and take care of what dictators and regimes denied them in the past.

What, however, is the United States? - When Napoleon pushed through Europe he was not motivated by the propagation of democracy - but what he achieved was the end of tribalist sectionalism.

The Corsican, like the US was a fearful actor, but in both cases, because they acted, modern civil democracy was given a decisive momentum. The Europeans have grown old again and are unable to do this.

Of them little or nothing is to be expected. It might be worthwhile to remind the United States of the fact that they will need new partners for the reformatations they proclaim - and that these partners are available.

No Fair Trial In Turkey

The European Court's decision in the Ocalan case

An interview with Mr. Ocalan's lawyer Irfan Dündar

by John Tobisch-Haupt

On 12 March 2003 the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) announced its decision in the Ocalan case. According to the decision your client did not get a fair trial. Turkey immediately said it would appeal against the decision. You also expressed discontentment with the judgement. What will be your next steps?

You are correct. On 12 March 2003 the lower chamber of the ECHR announced its decision and both Turkey and we as Mr Ocalan's lawyers have already signalled that we will appeal against the decision.

Overall, this judgement represents a step forward; however, we are not satisfied with the result. The chamber has not tapped the full potential of what was possible. It has not sufficiently accounted for the complexity of the case. In particular, it has ignored the illegal circumstances of our client's abduction. We are convinced that the European Convention on Human Rights was violated in twelve different points and this is why we had filed an application with the European Court. The Court, however, granted only some rather technical points. The background to this complicated and complex case was largely blanked out. Therefore we find the decision insufficient. We will therefore be looking into the chances of

an appeal against this decision. If it is admitted, this appeal will then be heard by the Grand Chamber. We are confident that this will be the case. As to the duration of these proceedings, we can only speculate at present.

You have already indicated why you find the decision unsatisfactory. Can you explain in more detail?

Following proceedings lasting three years, the European Court for Human Rights has announced its decision in the Ocalan case. It has condemned Turkey for violations of Articles 3, 5 and 6 of the Convention; that is for torture and degrading treatment, for violation of the right to freedom and physical integrity, and the right to a fair trial. The remaining points were either dismissed or the court considered that they belonged within the context of the articles already cited.

Thus, for instance, Abdullah Ocalan's inhumane solitary confinement might have been judged as psychological torture and degrading treatment, forbidden under Article 3 of the Convention. However, the court only saw that there was a violation of this article in the applicant's lasting uncertainty concerning the execution of his death sentence, which it considered

to be incompatible with humane treatment. The court did not question either the prison conditions or the death penalty itself. The same holds for the applicant's right to an adequate defence where the court did not find fault with the systematic prevention of our meetings with our client, which we consider to be a violation of the convention. On the other hand, the court found that there was a violation in the duration of the time our client was held incommunicado after his abduction and the time before he was allowed to see a lawyer.

Although we regard the decision generally as a step in the right direction, it is insufficient with a view to the circumstances of the illegal abduction of our client to Turkey which the court did not take into consideration. This operation was a breach of European law, under Article 5, paragraph 2 of the Convention. We will not accept this; on the contrary, this will be a central point in our appeal, which also will comprise Article 8 (protection of privacy), Article 9 (Freedom of conscience), and Article 10 (Freedom of expression).

Our opinion is that the decision has not sufficiently accounted for the social background underlying the Imrali trial.

Although applications to the European Court are only admissible on an individual basis, it is at least questionable whether this may serve as a reason for completely ignoring the social context. The Imrali trial was necessarily a political trial by which our client was exclusively held responsible for an unresolved conflict. Therefore, the trial is also a result of the unsolved Kurdish question. The court cannot make up for unsatisfactory politics; however it could be expected to at least

take the political dimension of this case into its considerations when reaching a decision - and to name the conflict. This would have been a contribution to a democratic solution of the problem. Our client takes the same view. This is why he repeatedly demanded a renewed trial before an international court.

In short: The court did not live up to its potential. Therefore the decision is unsatisfactory and we will file an appeal. Rightfully, we have to observe that the admission of the application, as well as the interim measure suspending the execution of the death sentence, were in favour of a positive development of the case and have thus contributed to the abolition of capital punishment in Turkey. In this respect, it is an enrichment of both Turkish and international case law.

A judgement of the European Court is binding on all member states of the European Council, including Turkey. Hence the Ocalan case would have to be retried. Is this a realistic prospect?

In recent years there have been adjustments to European law made by the individual member-states of the Council. This is not true for Turkey, however. In our opinion such speculation appears quite premature at present as we have not yet tapped the full potential of the European Court. Only if and when this decision becomes legally binding we will have to make observations in this direction. Whether a retrial in Turkey would be fairer than the first one is at least questionable. There is not much elbowroom for this considering the political situation in Turkey.

As soon as Abdullah Ocalan is concerned, the principles of law seem to stop being of much importance.

Any objective assessment of the Ocalan

case is de facto impossible. A retrial would necessarily be influenced by political considerations, at least partially owing to the Turkish legal system. Let me only refer to Article 125 of the Turkish penal code, which is a counterpart to the Italian penal code of the Mussolini era. This article stipulates that the death penalty should be used in cases involving attempts to secede from the Turkish state.

Abdullah Ocalan on his part, however, has repeatedly asserted that there was no such intentions and that he had only demanded the rights of his people. Nonetheless he was sentenced to death for high treason.

In view of such an undemocratic legal system it is doubtful whether a fair trial in accordance with the rule of law is possible at all.

The point is that what is needed is not a reassessment of some formal errors but a guarantee of the principle of fairness, which does not exist in the present situation.

Since he was delivered to Turkey Abdullah Ocalan has been kept prisoner on the island of Imrali in degrading conditions. These conditions have been increasingly tightened, even since the last quarter of 2002. After four months of total isolation you were allowed to see your client again for the first time on 13 March 2003. What was your impression, what is his mental and physical state? How did he react to the judgement of the European Court?

Our client has been exposed to strict solitary confinement for four years. Even before his prison conditions became so severe there were arbitrary obstructions put in the way of his legal visits, and visits from his family were also hindered. Since November 2003 these have been

completely prevented.

This is an act in violation of all legal principles. Officially the reason is always given as "adverse weather conditions."

Obviously, however, it is for political reasons that he is isolated. Although we were able to see him on 13 March, just only one week later the old practice was resumed and we were again not allowed to the island.

On 13 March we got a quite positive impression. He seems to be mentally stable and his state of health has not worsened, although this does not mean it is satisfactory.

Owing to the solitary confinement our client has lost his sense of smell. His concentration has weakened, and he suffers from an allergic irritation to the mucous membranes, which has in part led to massive difficulties in breathing.

Though our client sees a doctor regularly he is only examined superficially. No thorough medical examinations are carried out.

We had the opportunity to discuss with him the possibility of a retrial as well as the decision of the European Court. Though Turkey has enacted a new law allowing for retrials after a corresponding decision of the European Court - as in the case of Leyla Zana - pending proceedings were deliberately excepted.

Hence a retrial does not seem possible in the Ocalan case. This is, of course, a major obstacle.

Understandably, our client regards the ECHR decision as unsatisfactory for the reasons stated.

He therefore authorised us to file an appeal.

"The Heirs Of Gilgamesh"

Abdullah Ocalan's new book about the history of the Middle East and his vision of a democratic renaissance of the region

by Oliver Kontny

For over two years of his solitary confinement in a cell which the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has described as one of "claustrophobic design", Abdullah Ocalan worked on his submissions to the European Court of Human Rights. Deprived of access to the outside world, he used this channel to communicate his ideas on the history and future of the Middle East at a time when, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the talk of a "clash of civilisations" gained unprecedented political momentum.

The ideas put forward by Ocalan have found strong resonance within Kurdish society and played a part in the re-organisation of the liberation movement as KADEK. KADEK is an umbrella organisation comprising such groups as the new Iraqi-Kurdish Party for a Democratic Solution (PCDK), which conceives itself as an alternative to the worn-out semi-feudal parties of Jalal Talabani and Masoud Barzani, or the Free Women's Party (PJA), an autonomous all-women politico-military organisation with members from nearly all the different communities of the Middle East.

The book has by now been translated into Sorani, Kurmanji, Arabic, Persian, Russian and German. The German edition has recently been published by Atlantik Publishers under the title "Gilgameschs Erben" (The Heirs of Gil-

gamesh), and both an English and a French version are awaiting publication. For the time being, the International Initiative has made some extracts from different chapters of the work available in a booklet entitled "The Third Domain. Reconstructing Liberation".

A careful reading of this massive book (two volumes, comprising a total of about 1,000 pages) makes it clear that Ocalan's theses are not only crucial to an understanding of the approach that KADEK has taken vis-à-vis the war on Iraq, but that they can also provide guidance for any Western reader trying to find a way through the intriguing labyrinth of intersecting and intertwined conflicts and societal problems in the region, both those that have come down from medieval or even ancient times and those that are a product of the past 200 years of European expansionism.

It has become clear over the last decade that those social movements that intend to formulate independent policies will need an independent theory of their own.

Ocalan has delved into this comprehensive task and has come up with a rather original idiom - perhaps so much so that it might sometimes be difficult for a Western reader to follow him. It may be for this reason that Ekkehard Sauer-

mann, an emeritus professor who wrote the foreword to the German edition, has paid his respects to the expressionist poet Lichtenstein, saying that this is one of the books which, when it collides with the mind of the reader, produces a reverberation says something not only about the book, but also about that mind.

The defence submissions Ocalan presented in his grotesque kangaroo court trial on Imrali island in 1999 included ideas on how to peacefully resolve the conflict within the political borders of Turkey (published in English language under the title 'Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question', ISBN 3-931885-18-6).

These ideas were based on the concept of universal democratisation, as opposed to that of national autonomy.

On looking back, Ocalan regards these submissions as a mere call to de-escalate a situation where his abduction, effected under the participation of the USA and a number of European states, "offered a gift-wrapped package to chauvinism, which had reached a degree of hysteria; a package thrown from above into the arena of the twentieth century, as if it were a Roman spectacle in which people are fed to lions."

But the two volumes of submissions he drafted to the European Court of Human Rights are no longer only addressed to the Turkish public.

Ocalan has expanded upon his older ideas on a general analysis of civilisation. Such analysis is compulsory for an understanding of both his own vision and the Kurdish issue at large.

"Due to the fact that the circumstances that led to my arrest and the forces that carried it out are linked to the dominant forces of modern civilisation, it is obvious that my defence would have to be staged in this fashion [...] I used my right to a defence, feeling that it is my duty to

utilise the democratic legal platform that the ECHR is in order to say some things that [...] had to be said here on behalf of the peoples of the world."

What Ocalan has to say is not so much a matter of pragmatic calculation about the balance of powers between those involved in the conflict, but instead relates to the course of world history.

That is why the bulk of the first volume of the book is dedicated to an analysis of world history from the emergence of the archaic state in Ancient Mesopotamia to the crisis of Western capitalist civilisation. Ocalan's perspective goes beyond the Kurdish issue in its narrow sense as a national or ethnic problem.

From the very beginning the movement was keen on breaking up the status quo in the Middle East - even at the time it was but a handful of Kurdish and Turkish students in Ankara rallying around the ideas of Abdullah Ocalan in the mid-seventies.

On looking back, he now presents an auto-critical discussion of the various factors that once prompted the young PKK into seeking to exercise the undoubtedly legitimate right to self-determination exclusively through the perspective of setting up a separate state. Ocalan charges that the movement, himself included, confused liberation with the violent seizure of state power.

But the recent disapproval of this dogma has not made the movement abandon its original objective by narrowing it down to merely espousing national and cultural rights for the Kurds within the given community of states in the Middle East.

What Ocalan is really concerned about is leaving the political borders of the Middle Eastern states unaltered while radically changing the content of the politics they delimit.

By building up patterns of civil society "At an equal distance from the despotic state and from conservative traditional society", different ethnic and religious groups in the Middle East could establish a democratic federal union embracing the whole of the Middle East and transcending its given political borders. For this crisis-ridden region in the two-pronged grip of neo-liberal globalisation and retrograde, patriarchal dogma of religious or secular nationalist provenience, the emancipation of women is a prerequisite for any social progress. Thus, the gender question becomes an issue of priority in 21st century Middle Eastern politics.

For the Kurdish question in Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria,

Ocalan proposes a solution in the framework of such a democratic union.

Nationalist ideas based on the perspective of independent statehood or defending atavistic, centralist, monolingual and monocultural set-ups are critically rejected with reference to the state as a mechanism of oppression - "perhaps the oldest tool in history that has remained unchanged".

Thorough democratisation of all the states Kurds live in and societies they are associated with could both solve the Kurds' own problems and help establish their unity across the respective borders so that they would form a bridge to the benefit of all the communities living in these heterogeneous states.

Ocalan's vision is that by contributing to a process of building up such cross-border umbrellas of civil society, the Kurds would not only accelerate the advent of democratic civilisation in the Middle East but actually become part and parcel of a geopolitical and cultural renewal that will have repercussions on the West, too - heading towards a synthesis of civilisations instead of their destructive "clash".

This said, a sober assessment of the current scramble for the Middle East will reveal that here is a concoction of contradictions expressing itself on one level as a conflict between the old status quo, i.e. the various autocratic (Iraq, Syria), oligarchic (Turkey, Egypt) and monarchic (Saudi Arabia, Jordan etc.) regimes of the region, and divergent concepts of transformation.

On another level the conflict expresses itself as one between those who understand change as a process according to their narrow vested interests and hegemonic plans, and those who strive for democratic change and unity between the peoples of the region. In other words, the present configuration of conflict in the Middle East is both a struggle between the predominance of international capital and the ambitions of the peoples to live in freedom and dignity, and one between local nationalisms and projects for peace and democratisation: "Whilst the inward looking forces of the nation state deprive their own people of modern democracy and the enriching effects of technological development, they also enter into a clash with international finance capital on the matter of globalisation, and in both cases they play a reactionary role."

Once we apply the principle "think global, act local", we will see that the Kurds will hardly be well advised to come forward with projects beyond those they are able to realise.

Over and above general issues of strategies of democratisation such as gender equality, social justice, human rights safeguards, decentralisation and devolution, there are rather specific topics which Ocalan discusses: Arab-Israeli peace, the democratisation of Islamic forms of governance such as in Iran, the establishment of cultural and political pluralism in Syria and the democratisa-

tion of Turkey by solving its Kurdish problem - with all these, he asks primarily what it is the Kurds can contribute.

The Kurdish conflict, beyond being an end in itself, is thus being regarded as an obstacle before progress and development in the Middle East and its resolution as a contribution to the quest for rights and liberties of all the other nations and minorities of the region as a whole.

If this is so, democratisation cannot be reduced to reform packages as some would have us believe, but demands a wide organisation and participation of all sections of the population.

The vehicles for this are independent civil organisations.

Projects like these aim at creating an individual awareness of being a bearer of rights throughout society and at changing, democratising traditional social structures, mores and codes of behaviour.

But they also aim at democratising politics, they "mediate the link between society and state". Democratisation of the state itself should begin with generating a "susceptibility for democracy with the state" by means of a strong and conscious civil society and active participation in politics, and tendentially lead to a "transformation of the state" into a mere "general tool of co-ordination" of society and to establishing public "control over it as the fundamental institution of democratic politics."

So here we have a programme the realisation of which requires an immense amount of work if it is to be fully implemented - not only for states such as Iraq and Turkey, but also for Western societies.

As far as the Middle East is concerned, it furthermore requires a "mental revolution" which would consist of the three steps of an authentic renaissance (a re-

birth of the civilisational values of the Middle East), a reform of religion and an enlightenment embracing the whole of society.

Such revolution would entail for the Middle East a "separation from its reactionary ideological identity and personality".

Abdullah Ocalan clearly draws from the cultural heritage of the Middle East, be it the accomplishments of Ancient Mesopotamian civilisation, the spiritual and ethical progress encapsulated in the Monotheist religions or the peoples' will to freedom as expressed in ethnic and heterodox, mystical resistance movements.

His critical discussion of the phenomenon of "civilisation" dwells on the inventions ascribed to Neolithic societies in the Fertile Crescent as much as it does on early modern European achievements.

He confronts us with a subtle analysis of many of the features Eastern and Western civilisations share in common due to their roots in Ancient Mesopotamia and asks for ways how to overcome the current "overall crisis of civilisation" that has beset communities of both spheres.

This book - the first work of Abdullah Ocalan to be made available in Western languages in full length - has already sparked off a series of highly controversial discussions throughout Middle Eastern countries.

Let us now hope that it will also inspire a Western audience to recall the aphoristic saying that the point in political debate is not to answer the old questions, but to question the old answers.

The Third Domain can be downloaded at:

<http://www.freedom-for-ocalan.com/eng/documents>

Self-Determination And Democratisation

The vision of a democratic Middle East

An interview with Duran Kalkan, KADEK Presidential Council

How strong is KADEK today in Northern Iraq? People talk of 5.000 fighters. How does KADEK propose to use these forces?

KADEK's armed forces are present in Northern Iraq and also in the Kurdish areas of Turkey. There are more than 5000. The main force is stationed in the strategically important mountainous region of Northern Iraq. In addition to this the PCDK, which supports KADEK, organises amongst the civilian population in the villages and towns. The PCDK is active both above and below the 36 parallel. KADEK's political and military forces are not dependent on any side and therefore free to make their own decisions. KADEK's power is based exclusively on their own people.

KADEK is pursuing a peaceful solution of the Kurdish question by democratic means, and within retains the right to self-defence. KADEK feels itself to be bound in this only to the values of democracy, freedom and friendship between peoples. In this way KADEK represents the free will of the Kurdish people in the democratic arena. In conformity with this it uses its forces exclusively in support of the above mentioned values, and it will continue to act in this way in the future. In pursuit of these aims KADEK will not allow itself to be turned into an instrument of outside interventions or of the forces that support the status quo.

Some Kurdish groups maintain that Turkey harbours a desire to expand its territory, while Turkey says that the map of Kurdistan includes part of the territory of the Turkish state. What do you think about this?

Kurdistan is a geographical concept, and describes an area inhabited by a majority of Kurds. The concept of history was used for the first time by the Seljuk Sultan Sandjar. So in fact it was first used by the Turks. The area designated as Kurdistan was divided by the state boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The Kurdish areas of Iraq, Syria and Turkey were in the past part of the Ottoman Empire, which after World War I Turkey was obliged to surrender to Iraq and Syria upon the insistence of France and Great Britain. Against this background you cannot speak definitely of a desire on the part of Turkey to expand. But we cannot understand why Turkey is frightened by a concept that was used by the Seljuks and the Ottomans, and tries to suppress it. The only reason why the empire of the Seljuks and Ottomans did not fall apart was because it did indeed employ the concept of Kurdistan. On the contrary they united the Middle East and turned themselves into a power to be reckoned with.

The use of the concept Kurdistan is one thing, and the establishment of a state another. The mere use of the concept

does not imply the establishment of a state. We think that the Kurdish question can be solved without the establishment of a state, if democracy can be pushed forward within the boundaries of the existing states.

What is KADEK's view of an independent Kurdish state?

The Kurdish people and indeed the other peoples of the region should be able to exercise the right to independent self-determination of their fate. But it will not be possible to achieve this with the politically motivated establishment of more states. We believe that this is only possible through the creation of democratic structures in which freedom of conscience and expression is respected and in which people's general political and social rights are guaranteed. This is relevant not just for Kurdish society and for Turkey but for the whole of the Middle East. KADEK considers that the unity and democratisation of the region on the basis of the peoples' freedoms to be more important than the establishment of our own state. Given the realities of the region this position seems more practicable and will serve the interests of the peoples of the region much better.

What are the relations between KADEK and the units of Barzani and Talabani? Can you see them ever uniting?

The relations between KADEK and the KDP and PUK are complex. We are all part of the same nation. But of course we also have conflicts as a result of different political and ideological positions. This conflict also expresses the specific problems and experiences of Kurdish society. At the present time there is no collaboration nor is there any particular conflict. Unity between all these forces is possible if common political interests demand it. We will see if such conditions arise in future.

Even if the United States denies that American emissaries have met the leaders of KADEK, how should this report be viewed within the context of current developments? Mustafa Karasu who is a member of the presidency of KADEK, has apparently had talks about the establishment of federal structures. How do these talks effect the current war?

We do not believe that any serious talks or negotiations between KADEK and the United States of America have been held. Whether talks will take place in future we will have to see. It would be too early to make any concrete statements at this stage. However, we have to stress the fact that it was the USA who undertook the biggest attacks on our nation and our movement after the Gulf War in 1991, and kidnapped our leader as part of an international plot of intelligence services and handed him over to Turkey. We believe talks and negotiations with regard to us have taken place between Turkey and the US. A constructive outcome would be positive. There are no contacts and negotiations between KADEK and the USA that would effect the process of the current war. But there is also no particular conflict at this stage.

Translation from German by Campaign 'Peace in Kurdistan' (U.K.)

In The Aftermath Of The War

An interview with Kenneth Pollack

by Cemal Ucar

Now that the war in Iraq is over, which will be the next step of the campaign?

It is clear that there are people in the Bush administration who would like to take a very strong hand with Syria, and perhaps even invade Syria. I think that they base this on Syria's support for Hizbullah and other Palestinian terrorist groups and also the fact that Syria is a brutal dictatorship like Iraq. I might add that whether or not the United States will invade Syria is a very open question. I actually think that there are good reasons to believe that the U.S. will not do so. I think that the case for mounting an armed forces operation against Syria is much weaker than it was for Iraq, and I think that right now because of the extent of the involvement in Iraq, it is going to be very difficult for the U.S. to mount something significant against Syria.

Does secretary Powell's visit to Damascus suggest there is some kind of reconciliation under way?

It is entirely possible but it is also important to remember that secretary Powell's say in what this government does is sometimes more minor than I think his position as secretary of state would suggest. Another word, secretary Powell is not the only decision maker in the United States and we should not as-

sume that if Colin Powell is able to work something out with the Syrians that this will necessarily mean that everyone in this administration will buy into it.

The American government is very deeply divided. And they are deeply divided on almost every issue you can possibly imagine. And, right now the division over Syria is one where it does seem there are some in the Bush administration who would like to mount an attack on Syria and others who absolutely don't.

Who then are the falcons in this administration who would like to proceed towards Syria, it seems Secretary Rumsfeld is one of them...

Yes, although I do not know what secretary Rumsfeld thinks, there are certainly some in the office of the Secretary of Defence who do think this way.

We have seen before the war that Turkey did not take the necessary measures to allow the American forces to build a second front. After the war the Turks sounded differently. What is the administration's stance towards Turkey now, or are they divided on this issue, too?

I think the divisions are much less on Turkey, much more in harmony. I think there is a strong recognition in this administration that Turkey is a tremen-

dously important ally as the United States needs to do everything it possibly can to bolster the relationship but simultaneously recognising that Turkish interests in Iraq mean not necessarily the identical to American interest in Iraq and obviously the United States wants to make sure that Turkey's minimum security requirements are met in Iraq but we don't necessarily want to simply turn over the administration of post-war Iraq or the shape of a future Iraqi government to Turkish designs.

What does it mean withdrawing American forces from Incirlik air-base right now?

This is simply a recognition of the fact that Iraq is no longer a military problem and therefore there is no longer a need for operation Northern Watch.

Can we say that for Turkey the situation has changed, that this is not the same situation as after World War II or during the sixties when the Americans had that missile crisis with the Soviet Union.

Yes. The military threat to Turkey has been vastly reduced over the last fifty years. Obviously Turkey still has security issues out there the instability in the Caucasus, Turkey' centuries long feud with Greece, obviously there are still problems in Iran and Syria and elsewhere but there no longer is the kind of major military threat to Turkey that was there in the cold war.

Does Turkey remain a strategic point for the U.S. government for the future as a bridge between Europe and Asia?

No question. Turkey has been thought of this way for at least the last ten or fifteen years arguably for longer. Remember that Turkey was originally one of the members of the Cento-Pact as well. The U.S. has always thought of Turkey as not

just being a member of Europe but also a member of Middle East, an important member of the Middle East.

Let us talk about Iran. Do you see any challenges there for U.S. foreign policy in the immediate future, i.e. difficult issues concerning the U.S. or the neighbouring countries?

Iran is going to be important on a number of issues out there. There is the issue of democratisation in the Middle East for example. And Iran is through its own process of democratisation at the moment not doing very well Iran has backslid pretty badly in terms of progress toward democracy. There is the issue of weapons of mass destruction and the Iranians seem determined to acquire nuclear weapons which creates a problem throughout the region. They are spawning problems of proliferation elsewhere provoking the United States and probably frightening the Israelis.

There is the issue of terrorism which the United States has put on the global agenda as being its highest priority. Iran is one of the worst supporters of terrorism throughout the region. And beyond that there is the issue of Iraq and the reconstruction of Iraq and clearly the Iranians are determined to have their say in a future Iraqi government, and that, too, is going to bring them into clashes at least with the United States and possibly with the Iraqis, with the Turks, possibly with the Saudis, possibly with other countries.

So for all these different reasons Iran is going to be a source of tensions in all these different ways.

Now one of the big problems in the Middle East concerning Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, the Kurdish issue. The U.S. seems to be in support of the Kurds in north Iraq but. Do you see any chances that the U.S. might try to tackle the Kurdish question as a whole?

No, I honestly do not. Right now Washington's concern is principally for Iraq as a country, what the United States wants to do is to ensure that Iraq is a stable and prosperous democracy and their greatest concern is that the Kurds of Iraq remain integrated into that unified country that their rights are protected in the country and that they have a political voice equal to their demographic weight.

Some people say the Kurdish issue as a whole would be the next big issue on the agenda in the Middle East.

I would disagree and I don't think that the U.S. administration considers the Kurdish issue the next biggest one on their agenda.

Do you think this will be a topic to be raised in the forthcoming talks of the U.S. administration with Syria or Iran?

I think that the United States has not done enough for the plight of the Kurds for decades, and I would like to see the United States raising the plight of the Kurds more regularly with all of these different governments. In the case of Iraq this is one of the reasons why it is critical. The U.S. will help Iraq to build a stable society where the Kurds will no longer be oppressed, where they can realise their own aspirations, where they can speak Kurdish whenever they wish, and realise all the political freedoms to which they are entitled.

At the moment the Turkish government is again trying to exercise influence in Northern Iraq by playing the Turkmen card and inciting differences between the ethnic groups. Do you think that this could harm the process?

There is no question that the willingness of any of Iraq's neighbours because of

their own fears could be one of the greatest problems in Iraq. It is not just the Turks intervening in the north it is also the potential for the Syrians, the Jordanians, the Saudis intervening on behalf of the Sunnis, the potential of Iran intervening on behalf of the Shiites.

Any of this would simply complicate the situation and make it that much harder to realise the kind of true democracy that would give all citizens of Iraq the potential to live their lives the way that they would like to live them.

The Turkish foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, recently visited Damascus. Afterwards he told the press that Turkey, Iran, and Syria would continue their dialogue. This has been interpreted as a coalition against alleged Kurdish aspirations of autonomy or independence and the reconstruction of Iraq as it is planned right now.

From the perspective of the United States government my sense is that the Bush administration does recognise that for the Turks, and apart from that for the Syrians and Iranians as well, Kurdish independence in Northern Iraq is a red line. And I think that the United States is going to make it very clear that they are not going to allow that to happen in the foreseeable future because it would be a red line for the Turks and because it would lead to the potential disintegration of the Iraqi state.

They are trying to make it very clear that while respecting Turkey's red lines regarding the Kurds they are not simply going to turn over Northern Iraq to Turkey or allow Turkey to dictate exactly the status and the nature of the Kurdish lands inside of Iraq, that the Kurds are going to be protected, that they will have all the freedoms of the other Iraqis, and that as long as they do not declare statehood everything else ought to be negotiable.

How do you feel about the forthcoming

Iraqi interim government? Will it be able to solve the internal problems of Iraq? What kind of system is going to be established in Iraq, what will we see there?

I do not know what kind we will see but the only kind that will work would be a true democracy, one with geographic representation, one with some kind of a bill of rights like our own which guarantees certain protections to all of its citizens, one with all kinds of checks and balances to make sure that essential government regardless of who it is controlled by, Sunnis, Kurds or Shiite Arabs, does not have the ability to oppress any of the other groups inside the country.

This does look very much like the American plans after World War II, the plans that were made for the reconstruction and rebuilding of Germany and other countries, including something like a Marshall plan. But in my opinion Iraq seems to be a different case. There is an other mentality here, this is an Islamic country, a Middle-Eastern country. Do you think such plans will work here, what I mean to say is, this is, after all, a Western concept that is about to be applied to this country?

I think that if you had a system or government that was brought in by the West, and the United Nations is much better suited than the United States to do it and if you allowed it to grow under UN auspices, if you allowed that system to take hold in Iraq over a period of time I think it is entirely possible. This is certainly what has happened in Germany and Japan. Particularly Japan was certainly not a Western country. What we have seen over the last fifty years is that a democratic system can grow in any kind of soil. Turkey is a majority Muslim country and yet it has a functioning democracy. Bangladesh is a Country with a functioning democracy and there are many other places where people

said democracy could not work. But it has worked. I has never been perfect, it's not guaranteed, there are also places where it has failed but there is no reason a priori going in to believe that democracy can't find a way to take root in Iraq.

There has been a lot of criticism before and also after the war in particular by a number of European nations that the United States has acted without the legitimation of the United Nations Security Council and thus has sort of undermined the entire UN system.

First, I think it is true that the U.S. has clearly gravely weakened by its pre-war diplomacy the UN security council. I would not say that the fault was entirely with the United States. Although the Bush diplomacy was very regrettable and awful I think that the German, French, and Russian positions did more to undermine the authority of the security council, actually, because the Bush administration at least had the basis of seventeen UN resolutions that demonstrated that what it was doing was legal. There was a recognition among many countries that what the U.S. was doing was entirely legal and reasonable under those statutes.

It was the Germans, French, and Russians who were using the security council to apply their own political interests. So it was as much their fault as ours.

Second, post-war Iraq is an opportunity for the security council to demonstrate its relevance. And again I am deeply dismayed as much by the French, and German, and Russian stance as I am by the American. I think that the French and Russians standing up and saying we will veto any resolution that legitimises the American operation is simply using the security council as a forum for their own narrow political agendas which further undermines the security council.

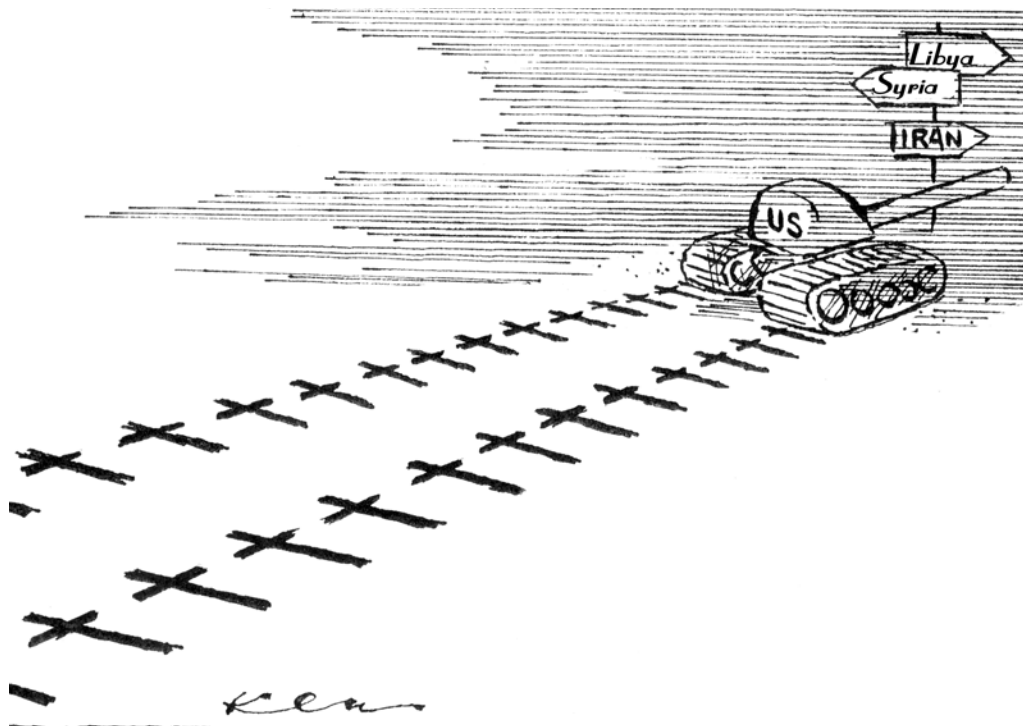
My hope would be that all of these na-

tions would satisfy these petty differences and recognise that what is best for Iraq and the Iraqi people, for the United States, and for the entire World and the United Nations is for them to come together and recognise that the reconstruction of Iraq has to be an international project. Thank you very much.

Kenneth M. Pollack is an expert on Iraq and the Persian Gulf and the director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. He is also a senior fellow in the Brookings Foreign Policy Studies Program.

Pollack was an Iran-Iraq military analyst with the CIA from 1988-1995. He was director for Persian Gulf Affairs on the NSC from 1999-2001, and director for Near East and South Asian Affairs on the NSC from 1995-1996. Additionally, he has been senior research professor at the National Defense University and director of National Security Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations.

He is the author of *The Threatening Storm: The Case For Invading Iraq*, which was published by Random House, and *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (University of Nebraska Press).



president of Magistratura Democratica, Italy
Heidi Ambrosch, Vice-president and Women Speaker, Communist Party of Austria
Mag. Walter Baier, President, Communist Party of Austria
Giana Nanini, Artist, Italy
Geraldine Chaplin, Actress, Madrid, Spain
Dieterich Kittner, Comedian, Writer, Cabarettist, Germany
David MacDowall, Writer, Great Britain
Alice Walker, Writer, USA
Franca Rame, Actress, Director, Writer, Italy
Prof. Dr. Jean Ziegler, Member of the Swiss National Council, Publisher, Switzerland
Dr. Diether Dehm, Vice President, PDS, Germany
Prof. Dr. Angela Davis, University of California, Santa Cruz, USA
Prof. Dr. Luigi Ferraioli, Philosophy and Law Professor, Italy
Prof. Dr. Uwe Jens Heuer, Law Professor, Berlin, Germany
Prof. Dr. Wolf-Dieter Narr, Committee for Fundamental Rights and Democracy, Germany
Prof. Dr. Werner Ruf, International Law Professor, Kassel University, Germany
Prof. Dr. Norman Paech, International Law Professor, Hamburg School of Economy and Politics, Germany
Prof. Dr. Gerhard Stuby, International Law Professor, Bremen University, Germany
Prof. Dr. h.c. Ronald Mönch, Chair of Bremen Highschool, Germany
Prof. Dr. Elmar Altvater, President, International Lelio Basso Donation for the rights of the peoples, Germany
Prof. Dr. Helmut Dahmer, Sociology Professor, Darmstadt Technical University, Germany
Prof. Jürgen Waller, Chair of School of Arts, Bremen, Germany
Christine Blower, Former President, National Union of Teachers (NUT), Great Britain
Ken Cameron, General Secretary, Fire Brigades Union (FBU), Great Britain
Josep Lluís Carod Roura, President ERC, Barcelona, Spain
Michael Feeny (I), Adviser of Cardinal Hume in refugee affaires, Great Britain
Gareth Peirce, Lawyer, Great Britain
Frances Webber, Barrister, Great Britain
Norbert Mattes, Information Project Near and Middle East, Germany
Yayla Mönch-Buçak, Oldenburg University, Germany
Dr. Mamoud Osman, Kurdish Politician, Great Britain
Jutta Bauer, Book Illustrator, Germany
Günther Schwarberg, Journalist, Germany
Hans Branscheidt, medico international / Appell von Hannover, Germany
Rolf Becker, Actor, IG Medien (Media Union), Germany